



K-STATE

Research and Extension

Walnut Creek District

District Newsletter

March, 2019

Message of the Month

We are turning the calendar to Spring, and hope mother nature agrees! As we look forward to the coming months, we hope you are taking advantage of the different programming available and of course the resources available to you through K-State Research and Extension. Don't forget to make sure we have your email and that you are following us on Facebook and Twitter.

LANE COUNTY
144 S Lane, Courthouse
PO Box 487
Dighton, KS 67839
Office: 620-397-2806
Toll Free: 866-755-1654
Fax: 620-397-2597

Erin Petersilie
Family &
Consumer Sciences

Expiring CRP Management

The Walnut Creek District and the Rush Co. Farm Bureau Association are hosting "Expiring CRP Management" in Rush Center on **Thursday, March 21** at the Sr. Center with registration starting at 9:30 and program at 10 am with a light lunch to follow. We will cover a multitude of options from points to consider if selling land, to EQUIP programs for fencing, water, and conservation as well as the Agronomic aspects of returning to crop production. Timely information for land owners, tenants, and producers alike.

RSVP to the LaCrosse office (#785-222-2710 or 800-460-9079) by **March 18** for meal count.

NESS COUNTY
503 S Pennsylvania Ave
Ness City, KS 67560
Office: 785-798-3921
Toll Free: 877-798-3921
Fax: 785-798-3540

Robyn Deines
4H & Youth

Chris Long
Ag & Plant Sciences

Calving vs. the Mud

The National Agriculture Statistics Service reported that, in 2018, KS received nearly 28 inches of rain in addition to some early snows, cool temps, and late rains. More recently we've had about 10 inches since October 1st. Considerably greater than the annual average of 21-22 inches and even more unusual is the late fall rains.

(Continued on page 2)

RUSH COUNTY
702 Main St
PO Box 70
LaCrosse, KS 67548
Office: 785-222-2710
Toll Free: 800-460-9079
Fax: 785-222-2843

Jared Petersilie
Ag & Livestock

(Continued from page 1)

In addition to the wet conditions, the fall and winter solstice have been cool. Since December we've only made in out of the 50's 4 times, with the Kansas Mesonet showing an average high of right at 40 degrees, so not much drying up.

So what's the point? The extreme cold and wet conditions are a potential hazard for the survival of newborn calves. Teresa Steckler, beef specialist with the University of Illinois has a list of points for the continued muddy conditions which are way more common in the "I" states

Calf survival can be a challenge when Mother Nature is not cooperative. Death of calves may be due to one or more factors such as genetic abnormalities dystocia, pathogens (scours, pneumonia, and navel infection), and environmental stress (cold, wet weather).

Maternal health also plays an important role in calf survival; the dam requires adequate nutrition for proper fetal growth and quality of colostrum. Appropriate nutritional levels are especially important for heifers.

The ample rain received last fall and recent snows have created perhaps one of the hardest factors to address at calving: MUD

While almost every beef producer has dealt with calves in mud at some point, mud can seriously affect the health of newborn calves. Pathogens can travel up the umbilical cord and have easy access to the calf's circulatory system via the liver.

It is critical to address proper navel and umbilical cord care for calves born in muddy lots, treat the navel and cord by dipping or spraying it with iodine or another disinfectant solution to prevent infection. This should be done to all calves soon after birth.

If possible, move the cow-calf pair to an area with dry bedding since the newborn cord will still be open to invading pathogens. Another option is to implement the Sand Hills method of moving the pregnant cows to fresh ground every 2 weeks. This keeps the older calves from exposing the newborns to pathogens they built immunity to. This system is proven to work well, but requires additional feeding areas, fencing, protection and water.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Perhaps the most important factor in calf survival is the intake of colostrum as soon as possible after birth. For calves in mud, colostrum intake is critical because colostrum provides the calf with its first mechanism against pathogens. Colostrum contains various immunoglobulins, white blood cells, and other immune substances to fight off disease and infection, and it also provides energy. The calf's ability to absorb immunoglobulins decreases rapidly with age. This is why it is recommended that calves consume colostrum within the first 2 hours following birth.

Colostrum quality will vary from animal to animal. Cow colostrum will have a higher concentration of antibodies than that from heifers. Cows losing weight will likely produce low-quality colostrum for the newborn calf. Feed cows, if necessary, to keep them in good body condition so that they can produce higher quality colostrum.

There is no magic method for calving in the mud. Just apply the basics and pay special attention to these calves born in less-than-perfect conditions. Proper attention should minimize death loss, sickness, infection, and stress.



Walk Kansas will kick off March 17. Get you and five other teammates together, and get ready to work towards a healthier lifestyle. If you are needing HealthQuest points for your health insurance, this will qualify for 4 points. We will continue to use both an online system for those that like to use that system and a paper system for those that are more comfortable with just calling in your totals. If you would like to register online, go to <https://www.walkkansasonline.org>. If registering in person works for you, just stop by one of our offices. You are welcome to have team members that live outside of our district or even our state to participate with you! Cost is \$8/person. If you have any youth (18 and under) participating on your team, they are free!





What is a Life Skill?

What is a life skill? There may be some formal definitions from youth development experts, but I want to share with you what I think a life skill is in the 4-H youth program.

It is having the ability to make a difference in everyday living. If a young person develops life skills, they will have what they need to respond to significant life events, both good and bad. I also think having life skills will lead a person to be a self-directing, productive, contributing member of society. I would like my children to be able to function effectively in this fast pace, every-changing world. I think most parents want that for their children.

The five life skills for Kansas 4-H are 1) Develop a positive self-concept, 2) Develop an inquiring mind, 3) Learn to make decisions, 4) Develop a concern for the community and 5) Learn to relate well with others.

Life skills can be learned. They take training and practice. Children are not born with a self-concept. They are born with a personality and they can learn to have a positive outlook on themselves and on life. In a positive youth program, youth hopefully receive comfort and acceptance from a group, recognition for accomplishment and a chance to share their ideas.

A child will develop an inquiring mind if interest and involvement are part of the project planning. If a child is told what project to take or told what they will participate in, their interest will most likely not be as strong. If the child is given a chance to be the “teacher” and can teach others what they have learned, their skill level will be raised. In 4-H, youth are encouraged to be junior leaders at age 12 and are asked to share what they have learned with the younger members.

Youth will learn to make decisions if they are involved in planning what they want to do. As parents and adult leaders, we can make choices available and maybe even supply necessary information, but it is important to let youth make the decision about what they will do.

Our young people are our future. They will develop a concern for the community if the project work is meeting a need for society, such as providing food for a hungry world. If every youth organization includes community service as part of their yearly plan, we will continue to have someone taking care of our community.

Last but not least, our young people have to learn to relate well with others. Through the 4-H program we collaborate with Team Work projects, youth are given the chance to work with caring adults, and be part of a community Club.

Life skills are the basics to self-esteem, coping and surviving. It is our responsibility to prepare our young people for the future. Consider the 4-H program as a place for your children to learn the necessary skills for life.

For more information on what you can do to help your kids learn life skills contact your local extension office.

Upcoming Dates for Walnut Creek District 4-H



After School 4-H

It is time for us to start the Spring After School sessions. This four week session will focus on Anti-Bullying, Character Building and hav-

ing FUN! The After School program is for youth Kindergarten thru 5th grade. The first round will be at the Ness City High School Cafeteria on March 5, 19, 26 and April 2. We will also start this round with Otis Bison at the Grade School Cafeteria on March 6, 20, 27 and April 3rd. The second round will start later and include LaCrosse Grade School and Dighton Grade School. If you are a teen and would like to help we are ALWAYS grateful to have extra hands to help us.

County Camp Dates

If you are interested in Summer Camp you will want to get these dates on your calendar for some fun nights, meeting new people and making great memories. Registrations are due May 1st for all camps. Counselor applications are due by April 1st for all camps.



Cedar Bluff Overnight—June 6-7 Cedar Bluff State Park, Theme—Little Camp on the Prairie \$25 for 4-H and non 4-H youth 5-12 years of age. Counselors need to be at least 13 or older.
Heart of KS 4-H Camp—June 11-14, Rock Spring 4-H Center, Junction City, Theme—It's an Adventure, \$195 for 4-H and non 4-H, 3rd grade thru 8th, counselors must be 15 or older.
4 Clover 4-H Camp—June 19-21, Dodge City Community College, Theme—Inspire Kids to Do, \$85 for 4-H. Members only 7-10 years of age, counselors must be 14 or older.

County Fair Dates and Themes

Mark your calendars now so there are no conflicts:

Lane County Fair is July 17-20 with Clothing being judged on July 15th. Theme: Carnival Lights and Country Nights



Ness County Fair is July 24-27 with Clothing and Photography Judged on July 22nd. Theme: Barn in the USA

Rush County Fair is July 31– Aug 3 with Clothing and Photography Judged on July 29th. Theme (Not confirmed yet, something with Summer Fun)

Episodic Volunteers Wanted

Walnut Creek District is looking for Episodic volunteers to help teach our youth skills within Project Areas. Our communities all have excellent people living within them and we would love for you to share your hobbies and your skills with our kiddos. If you would want to be a volunteer that would give back an hour, two hours or more, within the next few months, we would love to have you! Ideas that we are looking for would be

- Specific food skills (cakes, noodles, cinnamon rolls, cultural foods, etc.)
- Fiber Art Skills (quilting, knitting, crocheting, weaving, sewing, etc.)
- Livestock Showing and Husbandry skills
- Rocketry skills, launching and creation.
- Science—Geology, Entomology, Forestry
- 4-H Promotions
- Creative projects (ceramics, crafts, posters, notebooks, etc.)

Time to Plant Potatoes Approaching

St. Patrick's Day is just around the corner, so if we can get rid of the snow and start to warm up slightly it will be time to get seed potatoes in the ground. Actually any time from mid-to late-March is fine for potato planting. Be sure to buy seed potatoes rather than using those bought for cooking. Seed potatoes are certified disease free and have plenty of starch to sprout as quickly as soil temperatures allow. Most seed potatoes can be cut into four pieces, though large potatoes may yield more, and small less. Each seed piece should be between 1.5 and 2 ounces. Seed pieces this size will have more than one eye.

Each pound of potatoes should yield 8 to 10 seed pieces. Cut the seed 2-3 days before planting so freshly cut surfaces have a chance to suberize, or toughen, and form a protective coating. Storing seed in a warm location during suberization will speed the process. Plant each seed piece about 1 to 2 inches deep and 8 to 12 inches apart in rows. Though it is important to plant potatoes in March, emergence is slow. It is often mid-to late-April before new plants poke their way through the soil. As the potatoes grow, pull soil up to the base of the plants. New potatoes are borne above the planted seed piece, and it is important to keep sunlight from hitting the new potatoes. Exposed potatoes will turn green and produce a poisonous substance called solanine. Keeping the potatoes covered will prevent this.



Soil Temperature and Vegetables

One of the most neglected tools for vegetable gardeners is a soil thermometer. Soil temperature is a much better measure of when to plant than air temperature or the calendar. Planting when soil is too cool can cause some seeds to rot and transplants to sit there and do nothing.

A number of vegetables can germinate and grow at cool temperatures. For example, peas will germinate and grow well at a soil temperature of 40 degrees F. Though lettuce, parsnips, and spinach can sprout at a soil temperature of 35 F, they prefer at least 45 F for best germination and growth. Radishes also do well at a soil temperature of 45 F. Warm season crops such as tomatoes, sweet corn, and beans prefer at least 55 F for germination, or transplanting, but others such as peppers, cucumbers, melons, and sweet potatoes need it even warmer, about 60 F.

Taking soil temperature accurately is a bit of science. First, use a metal soil thermometer, which is sold in many garden, auto parts and hardware stores. Take temperature 2.5 inches deep at about 10 to 11 am. Temperature variations throughout the day and night affect soil temperature, with lowest readings after dawn and warmest around mid-afternoon. The late morning reading gives a good average temperature. If taking the soil temperature at this time is not practical, take a reading before you leave for work and a second when you return home and use the average. Also be sure to get a consistent reading for four to five days in a row before planting, and make sure a cold snap is not predicted, which in Kansas could be tough.

To put things in perspective for our district, checking with K-State Weather Mesonet and their three stations we're not even close to the ball park for some plants to start going in the ground. The Rush County station is just northwest of LaCrosse, and it has measured 30.7-31.3 degrees for the end of February, at the 2-inch depth. The Ness County station is south of Ness City, and measured 25.5-31.2 degrees at the end of February. In Lane County, the station is north of Dighton, the 2-inch soil temperature there ranged from 26 to 31.2 degrees at the end of February. With how winter has shaped up so far, we still have time before garden plants are going to succeed when planted.



Walnut Creek Extension District
144 S Lane
PO Box 487
Dighton, KS 67839

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DIGHTON KS
PERMIT NO.7